
NLSY79 APPENDIX 7:
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

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The NLSY79 unemployment rate variables are constructed using state and area labor force data from the May publication of *Employment and Earnings* for the month of March of each survey year. *Employment and Earnings* is published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and lists the civilian labor force and number of unemployed persons for every state and selected metropolitan areas.

The figures provided for the state and selected metropolitan areas are used to compute the unemployment rate for the portion or balance of the state that is not represented in a metropolitan statistical area. If a respondent resides in a metropolitan area that is listed in *Employment and Earnings*, then the unemployment rate is the unemployment rate for that metropolitan area. Otherwise, the unemployment rate is the computed balance of state unemployment rate for the state in which the respondent resides.

The respondent's metropolitan statistical area is assigned based on the county, state, and zip code of current residence. (For a detailed discussion of the hand-editing and merging process with other data files used to create the geographic variables, including the metropolitan statistical area, see Appendix 10: Geocode Documentation.)

As with other geographic based variables, respondents who are in the military, who are living outside of the United States, or who have invalid geographic data for a given survey year are valid skips on these variables.

The geocode data files contain the continuous unemployment rate as it was calculated for the area of residence. For confidentiality reasons, the main public use data files contain a collapsed version of the continuous unemployment rate.

